

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SINGAP 03155 170211Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-20 TRSE-00 EB-08 AID-05 IO-14 HA-05  
/122 W

-----054785 170223Z /70

R 170010Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 707  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON  
CINCPAC

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 3155

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: OTRA, PDIP, PEPR, SN, VN  
SUBJECT: PRESS COMMENT ON SRV VICE FONMIN VISIT TO  
SINGAPORE

REF: SINGAPORE 3108

1. TEXT OF STRAITS TIMES JULY 14 EDITORIAL ON PHAN HIEN  
VISIT FOLLOWS:

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"LIKE THE COMPANY THAT HAS NOT HIT THE TOP OF THE  
CHART WITH CONSUMERS, VIETNAM IS TRYING HARDER TO REACH  
HEARTS AND MINDS IN ASEAN COUNTRIES. SINCE THE START  
OF THEIR BIG TROUBLE WITH CHINA, THE VIETNAMESE HAVE  
CAREFULLY DOWNPLAYED THEIR HOSTILITY TOWARDS ASEAN.  
THEY HAVE, IN EFFECT, DONE AN ABOUT-FACE BY SAYING  
THAT THEY NOW NO LONGER REGARD ASEAN AS A MILITARY

ORGANIZATION, IMPLYING THAT HANOI IS READY TO COOPERATE WITH THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION. BILATERALLY, TOO, THERE IS A LOT OF DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY TO BETTER TIES. MR. PHAN HIEN'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE IS CLEARLY A PART OF THIS NEW APPROACH, AND OF COURSE WE WELCOME IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STATUS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OURSELVES AND VIETNAM. BUT THE UNSTATED QUESTION: IS ALL THIS FOR REAL? IS VIETNAM'S APPARENT SHOW OF FRIENDSHIP GENUINE, OR ARE THE GESTURES FROM HANOI MERELY POSTURINGS? DO NOT FORGET THAT MR. PHAN HIEN HAS TRIED THE ASEAN CIRCUIT BEFORE, EXUDING CHARM AND REASONABLENESS, ALMOST EXACTLY TWO YEARS AGO. AND SOON AFTER, LAOS, PRODDED BY VIETNAM AND THE SOVIET UNION, TOOK A STRONG ANTI-ASEAN LINE AT THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT.

"A STUDY OF HANOI'S PRONOUNCEMENTS WILL SHOW THAT IT VACILLATES BETWEEN 'SOFT' AND 'TOUGH'--DEPEND-  
ING ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS. THE AMERICANS UNDERSTAND THIS VERY WELL, ALTHOUGH FOR A TIME MANY OF THEM WERE CONFUSED, PARTICULARLY THE LIBERALS AND THE ANTI-WAR ELEMENTS WHO SAW IN THE VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP MEN OF GREAT DECENCY AND COURAGE. AND SO SOME OF THEM UNDOUB-  
TEDLY WERE, BUT IN THE FORMULATION AND CONDUCT OF POLICY THERE IS NO EXPEDIENT STATES WILL REFUSE TO RESORT TO. THUS, TODAY THE MAJOR COMMUNIST PROTA-  
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GONISTS ALL WANT TO COURT ASEAN. CHINA, ALSO A FAIRLY RECENT BELIEVER IN ASEAN, IS PLAYING THE ROLE OF BENIGN ADVISER. DO NOT TRUST THE VIETNAMESE, WARNS PEKING; VIETNAM IS THE JUNIOR PARTNER TO THE SOVIET UNION INTENT ON DOMINATING SOUTHEAST ASIA. IT IS IRONIC THAT THE CHINESE SHOULD BE ISSUING THESE WARNINGS, WHICH A DECADE AGO WERE BEING DISMISSED IN SOME QUARTERS AS THE GROUNDLESS FEARS OF ANTI-COMMUNIST WAR MONGERS. THOUGH WITH ITS OWN AXE TO GRIND, CHINA'S ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION CANNOT BE REJECTED COMPLETELY, FOR THE FACT IS THAT EVERYBODY IS SEEKING MORE INFLUENCE IN ASEAN."

2. SIMILAR THEME WITH NO NEW SUBSTANCE, APPEARED IN JULY 14 EDITORIAL OF AFTERNOON DAILY, NEW NATION. INGRAHAM

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, VISITS  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**TAGS:** OTRA, PDIP, PEPR, SN, VN, (PHAN HIEN)  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014